

### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

### **Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1 to 20. (Canceled).

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~20~~ 24, wherein an inert gas, with an addition of noble gases, is used as the process gas.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the inert gas includes nitrogen, and the noble gases include at least one of helium and argon.

23. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~20~~ 24, further comprising pressurizing the process gas at a pressure of maximally 1.5 bar.

24. (Currently Amended) ~~The A method according to claim 20, further for laser drilling~~ comprising:  
acting upon a region of a workpiece by a laser beam, so that a hole is produced in the region;

implementing the method under an adjustable process-gas atmosphere in such a way that, due to a reciprocal action between the laser beam and a process gas, plasma forms in at least one of the region and the hole acted upon by the laser beam;

arranging a backing at an outlet opening of the hole produced by the laser beam, the backing arranged with tilting at a specific angle with respect to at least one of the outlet opening and the workpiece, the angle influencing a form of the outlet opening; and

adjusting an impingement direction of the process gas by tilting relative to a direction of the laser beam, a tilting angle being up to 15°.

25. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~20~~ 24, wherein a material used for the backing has at least one of thermal and optical properties that influence the form of the outlet opening, the material including at least one of a metallic material and a copper-containing material.

26. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~20~~ 24, wherein the backing is arranged at a distance from at least one of the outlet opening and the workpiece that influences the form of the outlet opening, the distance being between 20  $\mu\text{m}$  and 200  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Claims 27 to 29. (Canceled).